THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) No, Sir. There is no change in India's offer in regard to educational services under the WTO.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) to (f) A proposal for the regulation of entry and operation, maintenance of quality and prevention of commercialization of education by Foreign Educational Institutions in higher education is currently under consideration of the Government. Subject to finalisation of policy in this regard, an appropriate legislation would be introduced in Parliament at the earliest.

Dropout rate amongst SCs/STs

418. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:
SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the dropout rate amongst the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes children is as high as 37 per cent and 49 per cent respectively;

(b) if so, the latest figures of dropout children from the schools in the country; and

(c) the extent to which Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, education guarantee schemes and alternate schools have improved quality of education amongst the children?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) In 2003-04, at the national level, the dropout rate of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe children at the primary stage (Classes I—V) is 36.6%, and 48.9% respectively.

(c) A multi-pronged approach has been adopted under SSA for reducing dropout rates. The focus is on strengthening of primary and upper primary schools, improvement in school infrastructure, recruitment of additional teachers, annual school grants, regular training of teachers etc. Other interventions aim at improving the demand for schooling through community mobilization, special interventions for enrolment and retention of vulnerable

groups of children including girls and children of weaker sections. Measures are also being undertaken to strengthen the accountability of the schools system towards parents and the community. The Mid-Day Meal Scheme that provides a cooked meal to all children of primary schools and alternative education centres has also helped in checking dropout rates.

Dropout of students

†419. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 31 per cent of students upto V standard, 50 per cent of students upto VIII standard and 63 per cent of students upto X standard leave their studies incomplete in the schools;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the number of students who leave their studies even before completing their XII standard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) In 2003-04, at the national level, the dropout rate is 31.5% at the primary stage (Classes I—V), 52.3% at the elementary stage (Classes I—VIII) and 62.7% at the secondary stage (Classes I—X).

(c) According to the available estimates, 20.4% of the students entering school in class I were enrolled in Class XII in 2003-04. This figure does not include the number of students opting for various technical, vocational and distance education courses after class VIII.

Percentage of school students admitted in higher education

†420. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.